

FACT SHEET: Just What Are “Halfway Houses”? (1 of 2)

What does “halfway house” mean?

Essentially, a halfway house is a community-based residential facility (CRF) that serves as a place of transition for offenders who are in the process of returning to live normal lives back in the community at large. These offenders are usually still under custodial care by Corrections Services Canada (CSC) or the Parole Board of Canada (PBC). It is therefore a conditional release, which allows some offenders to continue to serve the balance of their sentence outside of the institution.

How do CRFs differ from CCCs?

A Community Correctional Centre (CCC) is a minimum security facility operated by Corrections Services Canada. There are 16 CCCs as of 2011. CRFs offer a more realistic residential setting that does not have an institutional feel.

How long have halfway houses been in Canada?

There have been various forms of residential facilities available in Canada for over a century for offenders recently released from incarceration. But having a facility available for offenders while still under sentence was an idea that developed momentum in the US in the 1960s and spread to Canada soon thereafter (See Harold L. Raush, **Halfway House Movement: A Search for Sanity** 1968).

Toronto saw the opening of **Ingles House** in 1947 for women released from the Mercer Reformatory and the **Beverley Lodge** for male ex-offenders in 1954. The first **St. Leonard’s Halfway House** for federal prisoners was opened in Windsor, Ontario in 1962 (modelled on the one opened in Chicago in 1954).

How many halfway houses are there in Canada and Alberta?

Although there are some 175 CRFs in Canada, only some 151 focus strictly on male and female offenders. (Others often serve as treatment centres for various addictions or mental health issues). In 2011, there are 11 halfway houses in Alberta (5 in Edmonton, 4 in Calgary and 1 each in Lethbridge and Red Deer - <http://prhha.net/>).

How many residents are served by halfway houses in Alberta?

The most recent data (2011) indicate that there are 584 beds available, the majority of which are at **Calgary’s Centre of Hope** (356 beds). John Howard Societies accommodate 114 clients.

I have a halfway house on my block. Should I be worried about my family’s safety?

No. Residents in halfway houses are screened prior to acceptance for behavioural profiles and appropriate supervision established and vigorously maintained. Halfway houses offer a significantly safer alternative to mere release from prison without supervision after their sentence is complete.

In fact, evidence shows that neighbourhood real estate values are *not* negatively affected by having a halfway house nearby.

<http://www.johnhoward.ab.ca/pub/pdf/halfway.pdf>

Do halfway houses really work?

Yes. See the evidence in Part 2!